

BONN JOINS THE CO-EXISTENCE GAME

Again: Whither Germany?

HERBERT LUETHY

THE state of frightened pensiveness into which the political thinkers of the West were thrown by Adenauer's trip to Moscow, early in September, does not lack its ludicrous side. The Russians, it seems, won a great triumph by getting themselves recognized—by Bonn! One has to pinch oneself—whose status had been in doubt, Bonn's or that of the vast, powerful, and victory-swollen USSR? Hadn't Moscow chosen to regard the Federal Republic of West Germany as a puppet regime, a counterpart in their eyes to what the West, with infinitely more warrant, considered the "Democratic Republic" of East Germany to be? Wherein, then, lies the Russian "triumph"?

Moscow's invitation to Adenauer signified that the Russians had drawn the logical conclusion for their own policy from the Western powers' recognition, just a year ago, of the sovereignty of the Federal Republic. The Soviet note of invitation said as much: "The Soviet government is of the opinion that the renunciation of West Germany's status as an occupied country . . . has now created the indispensable conditions for the normalization and establishment of direct relations between the USSR and the Federal Republic." For Russia to recognize the sovereignty

granted against her wish to a West Germany created against her will, and without even asking reciprocal recognition for her German satellite, was to demonstrate a realism at which the world is still marveling. Was Chancellor Adenauer really expected haughtily to refuse to recognize the Soviet Union?

It is true that there was an effort, at Bonn and elsewhere, to cast him as a new Saint George sallying forth to Moscow to slay the dragon. Was this mere folly, or was it bluff? Perhaps a mixture of both. Insofar as it was bluff, its staging was certainly successful. Adenauer was able to "sell" the establishment of diplomatic relations between West Germany and the Soviet Union as so enormous a concession on his part that everybody is still amazed that he consented to it without getting anything more in return than a verbal promise to send home the German prisoners-of-war still in Russia. But nobody seems amazed at the fact that the Russians, on their side, asked no price for their recognition of what until a moment before they had termed an "unreconstructed Nazi" government.

Otherwise, however, both sides held stubbornly to their previous positions. The Chancellor solemnly affirmed that his government considered itself the only one capable of speaking for all Germany, and that in his view the so-called Democratic Republic of East Germany was illegitimate, and had been repudiated by its own subjects. The Russians declared no less firmly that they recognized the Federal Republic as being on the same footing with the Democratic Republic of Pankow, with which—as they put it in their note of invitation to Adenauer—they entertained "good mutual relations on a solid basis of equality and

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non-interference in internal affairs," and which they did not at all intend to sacrifice on the altar of German unity. It was therefore apparent from the first that for the immediate present there was nothing for the two governments to negotiate about; there was not even enough for them "to agree to disagree" about, since there were differences even over what the terms of disagreement were. The Chancellor declared that the restoration of German unity was the task of the four erstwhile occupying powers, whose diplomatic dealings at Geneva he did not wish to complicate with bilateral negotiation. The Russians declared that the restoration of German unity was the affair of the two German governments, and that all Adenauer had to do was consult with Grotewohl. They, the Russians, washed their hands of the whole matter. Thus for the time being Russia will in earnest continue to discuss German unity "over the heads of the Germans themselves," and the Bonn government will refuse to negotiate with Pankow. On the surface nothing was changed, except that there would now be a Russian ambassador in Bonn and a German one in Moscow.

AN EXCHANGE of ambassadors may mean a very little or it may mean a great deal. In this case it means a lot. The Germany of Adenauer was previously a creation of the Western powers; shut up inside the West, with its back to the Iron Curtain, its only doors and windows opened on the West. It was Western, certainly, in its interests and inclinations, Western by instinct—enthusiastically that. But chiefly it was Western by the force of circumstances and almost by definition. Henceforth if it remains Western, it will be by its *own* interests, intentions, and instinct pure and simple; nobody but the Russians have the force to compel it to decide otherwise. This, precisely, accounts for the vague anxiety in the West after Adenauer's visit to Moscow: West Germany now has the power to choose *not* to be Western—an anxiety entirely unconnected with the silly question of whether

Adenauer "won or lost." At present, there is no reason for fear: Western Germany remains as Western as ever; the only difference is, now she has a window on the East.

A window, not a door. It is harder to get in and out of a window than a door, but all the same a window is a window and not an Iron Curtain. In the last two years, traffic and communication between East and West Germany have swelled enormously. Nor has this been due mainly to the one-way movement of refugees—although each new step in the international "lessening of tension" brings with it a new wave of emigration from East to West, since it means for the inhabitants of the East Zone a further loss of hope for their eventual liberation. So it was after the "summit" meeting at Geneva, and so it is now after the "normalization" of relations between Moscow and Bonn. But there has also been a busier circulation on the "legal" level, as more and more Germans cross and recross the border to spend their vacations, visit parents, relatives, or friends, revisit their home towns, or just attend fairs and festivals. The Iron Curtain has got some holes in it—or rather has been pushed back from the Elbe to the Oder.

It would have been easy for the Russians to keep the Iron Curtain as tightly shut as before, so that little by little the two Germanies would grow further apart and perhaps become really estranged from one another. Most of the West Germans, being fairly satisfied with their lot, were quite ready in any case to forget about their "oppressed brothers in the East" except during Sunday speeches; and Pieck and Grotewohl, for their part, could ask for nothing better. But Soviet Russia has no intention of cutting off her part of Germany from the rest: holding to it, she manages to hold at least to the possibility of getting the rest of Germany for herself. She wants Germany to keep worrying about and longing for her reunification—to which Russia holds the key. Meanwhile the increased informal intercourse between the East and West zones constitutes a process of "integration at the base," something like the famous unity at the base which Commu-

nists in the 30's tried to promote through the Popular Front. The latter tactic, as well as the previous tactic of "united front from below," was justified in Communists' eyes by their conviction that, in the last analysis, a well-coordinated and disciplined minority, no matter how small, would always end up by capturing the amorphous and feckless crowd—*always*, even though one might have to wait.

For several months the lifting of the Iron Curtain reached even back beyond the eastern edge of the "Democratic Republic." West German tourists, journalists, and businessmen, in small but growing numbers, went up and down Eastern Europe, filling the newspapers of West Germany with their reports. In general, these reports were neither more nor less intelligent than those of many illustrious "Intourists" of the past who discovered that the inhabitants of Communist countries looked much like other men, and—what was even more surprising—that they all read Victor Hugo, Thomas Mann, and William Faulkner, right under the visitor's eyes as it were. There was one difference, nevertheless. These West German travelers were not seeing new and exotic lands for the first time, but were rediscovering countries full, for them, of memories—some of these affecting memories, others horrid. They found, that is, signs and traces of their own history; at any rate they were not foolish enough to fall for the sort of thing illustrated by the article of an eminent French ethnologist and political thinker (a man who wouldn't let you confuse two pre-Columbian Mexican tribes) stating that Vroclau (Breslau) was an old Slav settlement from which a few Prussian intruders had recently been chased.

This rediscovery of Eastern Europe by the Germans is an event of considerable importance. For ten years the East Germans had been as much—if not more—cut off from Eastern Europe as those in the West, for the "Democratic Republic" was hermetically sealed on *both* sides. Thus the Iron Curtain had spared all Germans the visible evidence of what had happened to them,

the consciousness of the extent of their historical disaster. That Europe of the East which had been for a millennium a land of Germano-Slav co-existence and struggle, sown with German peoples and German culture, had simply disappeared from the map. Recognition of this fact gives the Germans occasion to reflect on their *débâcle*—and on the fifteen years of sleep-walking that led up to it. With a little more perspective, the role of Adolf Hitler in German history will appear as that of the exterminator of German life and culture in the whole immense space between the Baltic and the Caspian Seas. His "Thousand Year Reich" succeeded, in its twelve years, in destroying root and branch the work of some ten centuries. In this context, the mass murder of the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe, with their Yiddish, which is a form of medieval German, and with the original attraction they felt for things German as representing enlightenment and emancipation, figures not only as an immense crime against humanity, but also as an integral part of the process of German suicide.

After 1945 everything German that once existed in Eastern Europe had sunk into the obscure past; it was, for Germans, as if the sea had swallowed up the countries east of the Elbe. But now this vast field of destruction emerges once again, and new travelers scour it with eyes rather different from those of innocent tourists from the West; their reports sometimes sound as lugubrious as ghost stories. Here and there, from Pomerania to Transylvania, they discover with surprise scattered groups of Germans living where they had lived before, with schools and "cultural circles," often very recently reopened (evidence of a wholly new tolerance on the part of the Communists). These are the pitiful remains of a proud past, and they give the Germans food for thought—all the more since ties are now being renewed between East Europe and German culture that were thought broken forever.

"CO-EXISTENCE," and the momentary lifting of the Iron Curtain, have re-

vealed other astonishing things to the Germans. Traditionally, France's press takes special notice of the place granted the French language at international meetings; it sometimes happens that the only thing it reports about these functions is the number of speakers expressing themselves in French. For the first time in years German newspaper readers have been able to read a report about their language being recognized in the same way at the International Congress of Historical Sciences in Rome—thanks, above all, to the massive participation of the Soviet satellite countries. "The Resurrection of a Language" was the title of the report of one German delegate, a Herr Schmitz van Vorst. "Anyone attending the postwar international meetings of learned societies in Western Europe knows to what degree German had become a marginal language at such functions. Now it is regaining its former central and mediating role. All the delegates from the East, the Yugoslavs, the Bulgarians, Rumanians, Hungarians, Czechs, sometimes even the Poles, and above all the Russians, spoke in German" (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Sept. 24, 1955).

This preference for German has to be explained; one remembers the pre-war congresses at which the elite of Eastern Europe's intellectuals spoke the purest and most aristocratic French. The social and political upheaval in Eastern Europe has brought about a decisive change in this respect, and one very much like that produced a quarter of a century earlier by the revolution in Russia. In both cases it was precisely the aristocracy, with its intimate ties with French culture, that was uprooted. In Eastern Europe, as twenty-five years ago in Russia, an intelligentsia raised on Germano-Marxist culture has taken over the levers of command, an intelligentsia for whom German is the language of the sacred books, whose members wore out their breeches studying *Das Kapital*, and who were never touched by the slightest breath of Latin tradition. In 1946 one could already see what had happened. In Paris, at the Peace Conference in the Luxembourg Palace, the very last conference

that brought official delegates from Eastern Europe to the West, the delegations from Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Poland had no other common language, even when speaking among themselves, than the accursed tongue of the common enemy. And what was true of this whole intelligentsia was, of course, doubly true of the professors of Marxist history, the indefatigable exegetes of the True Doctrine: they didn't have too much to say at the historical conference in Rome, but what they did say breathed the dust of the Marx-Engels Library of around 1900. "An Italian diplomat seated next to me," Herr Schmitz van Vorst recounts, "whispered in my ear: 'It is always claimed in Moscow that the Russians learn every language, but in the final analysis the only one they know is German.' . . . there were sessions [in which] one heard practically nothing but German, and an American scholar felt obliged to excuse himself for not knowing the language well enough. Thus the Congress gave an inadvertent reply to the question, What is Germany? Germany is neither the West nor the East, it is the middle, and mediates [between the two]. It was as if an axis were very naturally returned to its ancient sockets. . . ."

THERE was something of this underlying affinity between Germans and the East in the cordial and brutal frankness of the German-Russian talks at Moscow, with their alternation of quarrels, claspings to the bosom, and confessions. Khrushchev thought it necessary to warn the delegates against passions that were out of place in such debates—the only kind of passion exhibited during the many other conferences since the war had been a cold doctrinal one. Chancellor Adenauer himself went very far in two opposed directions. He dared raise a storm by recalling the atrocities of the Red Army along with those of the Nazis. But he also knew how to allude to the profundity of the Russian soul, so like that of the German. (This same man, as mayor of Cologne under the Weimar Republic, had been able to rouse the enthusiasm even of the Com-

munist fraction on the Municipal Council for a very personal project, a suspension bridge over the Rhine, by invoking the memory of the beauty of the suspension bridges over the Neva in the fogs of St. Petersburg.) And he did not fail to inform Khrushchev that his, Adenauer's, great personal friend Pferdmenges, a banker of Cologne, was the nephew of none other than Friedrich Engels. In short, everyone felt at home.

So much blood had been spilled on both sides that a strange intimacy emerged, a kind of mutual and horrified respect: "In the two last world wars the greatest sacrifices were borne precisely by the Soviet and German peoples. The losses of these peoples ran to millions of human lives, and exceeded by many times the total losses borne by all the other countries that participated in the war." This echoed the Soviet note of invitation to the Chancellor, which repeated almost textually the words of Stalin's message of salutation in 1949 to the founders of the "Democratic Republic" of Pankow: "The experience of the last war has shown that it is the German and Soviet peoples who made the greatest sacrifices in this war and that these two peoples are endowed with the greatest possibility of accomplishing great deeds of worldwide scope. . . ." And, at bottom, of all the countries of the Continent it is only Germany that the Russians take seriously, whether as enemy or ally. For them, Germany never ceased to be the real stake of the cold war; she will not cease being the stake of the war of smiles.

ALL this is not easily expressed in political and diplomatic terms. In contrast to a common opinion, West Germany is not swarming with Machiavellis impatient for adventure, tempted by the idea of playing off foreign powers against each other, or by "national Bolshevism," or by a Greater Germany associated with an even Greater Russia. When Khrushchev talked to the Bonn delegation of Germany's vocation as a great world power, he got almost no echo in reply—or only a skeptical one. The Germans be-

trayed something more than the fear of a child whose fingers have been badly burned by power politics—and more than the resignation of complacent bourgeois. Tauroggen, Rapallo, all those nightmares of German-Russian collaboration haunting Western diplomacy today, were the work, on the German side, of professional military men and career diplomats of the same social extraction and belonging to the same tradition. Their kind is out of power today. The temptation to side with Russia is felt in Germany right now only by romantics still unawakened from dreams of "national greatness" and the "will to power"; it may exhilarate and uplift retired army officers, salon strategists, and the "idealists" of a deflated pan-Germanism, but it does not touch the industrialist, the trade unionist, or the mass of those Germans who, starting from the bottom in 1945, built themselves a bearable material life and have no desire to start all over again. Security, prosperity, decency, and even—let no one smile at this—liberty, *that* is the West. And besides, the Western powers have promised to do all that is possible to reunify Germany on the basis of full sovereignty, while the Russians, more explicit than ever, offer reunification only in partnership with Ulbricht, Pieck, and Grotewohl.

The cold shower came right after Chancellor Adenauer returned from Moscow. Twenty-four hours later Grotewohl turned up under the Kremlin's walls and received the same banquets and the same embraces. The future, of course, still belonged to Germany, but now it was the Germany of the "Popular Democracy" of Pankow.

OFFICIALLY, the reunification of Germany still heads the list of Western problems. But at bottom everybody agrees that the *détente* amounts to the consecration and, even more, refurbishing of the status quo. The *détente* does not mean solving the problems still open; it means leaving them unsolved and being reconciled to the fact. Real disarmament is perhaps impossible, and it will certainly take a long time to agree on

its terms, but a reduction of armaments is certainly taking place. The United States, without noise or fuss, has reduced her armed forces from 3,700,000 to 2,940,000 since 1954, and will reduce them to 2,280,000 by June of 1956. The Soviet Union did not fail to seize its chance to announce in its turn, and with the greatest possible fanfare, the reduction of its armies by 640,000 men—a reduction nobody can verify since the total figures for the armed forces of the Russians and their satellites is a state secret—but which may be regarded fairly probable in view of Russia's labor shortage. "Co-existence" is an urgent necessity for an economy that was getting winded in the cold war. And it also happens to be perfectly true that Russia wants to live in peace so that she can enjoy her possessions and her conquests. The formal guarantee of the present division of Europe, which, as Moscow sees it, the *détente* consecrates, will perhaps find its juridical form in a "pact for European security"; so far it has been a reality without such a pact.

The single and final stumbling block is German unity, which the West has inscribed on its banners. Well, it will go on being discussed, and after a while people will get tired of talking about it. Is the fate of the Saxons, the Brandenburgers, and the Prussians going to keep on troubling a world untroubled by the complete disappearance of the Baltic states and the enslavement of all Eastern Europe? It is significant that the neutral term, "reunification," which the Russians suggested, has discreetly replaced, even in the West, the free elections once insisted on so strongly; this may make it possible one fine day, after a period of decent transition, to "take into consideration the reality of the existence of the Democratic Republic of Pankow." In the meantime Russia has taken care to restore the luster of her "Democratic Republic" with a handsome treaty of friendship based on "an entire equality of rights, mutual respect for sovereignty, and non-interference in internal affairs," and it has granted the government of Pankow freedom to establish its own

diplomatic relations, "including relations with the Federal German Republic." Already envisaging a fusion of the two present governments in Germany, rather than a unitary German regime established by free elections, the Pankow regime is dressed up as a "National Front." Ulbricht, following Adenauer to Moscow, was reminded by Comrade Khrushchev of something that he, like everybody else, had forgotten a little: that the government of East Germany was not a Communist but a coalition government, and that a coalition rested on "the necessity of reciprocal concessions."

THERE is only one error in the "neo-realism" that the West displays towards the *détente*: the Soviet Union is not interested in maintaining the status quo. The Westerners have placed their stamp of approval on the whole diplomatic vocabulary of the Soviets: "co-existence," "*détente*," "security pact," "reunification." Westerners translate all this as the preservation of the status quo. But this term, at once disillusioning and reassuring, is precisely the one that does *not* appear in the Soviet vocabulary; you search for it in vain in all the mountains of paper and words produced by the Russians over almost forty years. Of course, the Russians do not want the present state of things to change to their own disadvantage. But, in contrast to so many Western politicians, they count on the passage of time and the "movement of history," on the ripening of circumstance and the rotting of men and of wills, to bring them what they want. If this were all that was left of their old apprenticeship in "historical materialism," it would still give them a very definite intellectual superiority over the "neo-realists" of the status quo. When Adenauer, arriving in Moscow, declared that what was most real in the "reality" of the division of Germany was the evident impossibility of letting such a state of things endure, the Soviet statesmen were doubtless in full accord with him; their sole disagreement concerned the direction of the desired evolution. They had, above all, the tranquil assurance of having more time be-

fore them than the tenacious old man opposite. There was no hurry: at Geneva, Khrushchev, overflowing with joviality, kept on recalling the old Russian proverb: "He who lives will see."

The war of smiles permits one to look at things with serenity and patience. The Federal Republic is part of the Western alliance, which is a defensive one. But the alliance was formed against the Soviet bloc; hence, declared Khrushchev very sensibly, "We statesmen ought to do everything necessary to make it weaker and not stronger. This is a legitimate aim." But then he proceeded to say, without anxiety and without impatience: "To raise the question of the withdrawal of the German Federal Republic from NATO would be equally unrealistic. It would sound like an ultimatum on our part. We do not raise the question." He did not need to—other people will raise it for him, in every Western capital.

The Bundestag, after Adenauer's return from Moscow, thought it best to avoid any exhaustive debate. In the opinion of everyone—and for once even that of the Socialist opposition—this was not the moment to discuss alliances and the ways and means of getting out of them, nor the right time, on the eve of the October Conference of Foreign Ministers at Geneva, publicly to consider the "reality of Pankow." And besides, it was well understood that as long as "the old man" was around, Bonn could not consider leaving NATO or negotiating with the Pankow puppets.

One begins, however, to see on all sides, that the *détente* has nothing to do with a stabilization of the status quo; on the contrary, it was the cold war—which is to say, the organized resistance of the West—that best guaranteed the status quo, and it is the war of smiles that has started everything going again and called everything in question, including defensive alliances. Who needs alliances when tensions are lessening? The Federal Republic was a very stable fact in the cold war; with its back up against the Iron Curtain, tied to the West by the Atlantic Pact, it could not budge. But now the

Federal Republic, too, has joined the game of co-existence. In the East the Iron Curtain has lifted, giving glimpses of forgotten landscapes that can make a German a little giddy; in the West there is always the Atlantic Pact, but there is also something of a military vacuum, which has become more of a vacuum than ever since France committed her forces in Africa. Of course, there is always the hope, now five years old, of setting up a German army, yet even Chancellor Adenauer, after his return from Moscow, with a hastiness that everyone thought suspect, tried to postpone the date of its rebirth. There is also the hope, which is even taken account of in the plans of the Allies, of a neutralized Germany. Certainly, this neutral Germany would have an army—but who finds that reassuring?

Adenauer's originality, as compared with the other statesmen of the West, consists in his seeming to be the only one of them never to have stopped being distrustful of the Germans—not of the German "soul" or of German "militarism," or of other such philosophical entities, but of the fundamental instability of a people established on the moving sands of a Central Europe already half-swallowed up by the Russian empire; of a nation whose national traditions have collapsed and that now lives on as an industrious and prosperous No Man's Land. And the Germans are distrustful enough of themselves, and of the fantastic contingencies of their situation, to be willing to follow Adenauer. His entire ambition was to give Germany, "while he was still there," a true and valid object of allegiance and loyalty in the reality of a united Europe ("that myth"), and to forge for her a federal bond strong enough to survive the fluctuations of cold war alliances. It is certainly too soon to say he has failed, but it is obvious that he has not succeeded. The Treaties of Paris and the Atlantic Pact are scarcely that bond. The *détente* has not been reassuring, particularly since Geneva, and people have begun to talk again of a "revival of Europe," but without anyone's knowing very well how it is to come about. So much time has

been taken up treating this as an idea to think about that it has degenerated into a slogan. Whatever prestige or force the slogan has left is about to be squandered in the ignominious contest over the Saar.

Germany, too, is now part of the game of co-existence, which is to say that her fate is once again in the balance. But there is no present danger that she will step through her new window on the East; the Russian conditions for German unification have been too clearly declared. Bonn is scarcely prepared to break all its alliances with the West and accept, as an equal partner, the Pankow regime with its "socialist conquests."

GERMANY'S reunification involves a game of patience that will probably take a very long time to play out, at least for those who calculate historical time in terms of legislatures or ministries. But Khrushchev is of the opinion that he can wait: "We'll get them by attrition." And he can wait all the more patiently since the prize in view for the Russians seems so great in relation to what they are risking in order to gain it. The most extreme hypothesis is that East Ger-

many would leave the Eastern bloc; but it is doubtful whether this would upset the balance of power in the world, or even in Europe. Supposing, however, the contrary happened and that the Federal Republic left the Western system; it is enough to pick up a map of Europe and make a rapid calculation of forces to understand what this would mean.

The cold war, subtle minds told us, gave Germany and old Adenauer an importance they did not deserve. When the *détente* came, all this would disappear and one would finally be able to talk of other things. Well, the *détente* has come and the splintering and the cracking and the damage are even more general than one foresaw. In the cheery atmosphere of the war of smiles, Adenauer's bony face, to which a smile comes so painfully, stands out with depressing effect. If he does not bear the weight of the world on his shoulders, he is at least the only one to shoulder the heavy responsibility of that optimism with which, against his own wishes, a new and sovereign Germany, not subordinated to any European federation, has been established.